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BUREAU OF EXPERTIZING.

Advice as to the placing at public or private sale of art works of all kinds, pictures, sculptures, furniture, bibelots, etc., will be given at the office of the AMERICAN ART NEWS, and also counsel as to the value of art works and the obtaining of the best "expert" opinion on the same. For these services a nominal fee will be charged. Persons having art works and desirous of disposing or obtaining an idea of their value, will find our service on these lines a saving of time, and, in many instances, of unnecessary expense. It is guaranteed that any opinion given will be so given without regard to personal or commercial motives.

THE MARCH BURLINGTON.

The March number of the Burlington Magazine contains much of interest to American readers. The frontispiece is a picture by Aimée Duvivier, recently sold by the Ehrich Galleries, and there is an article on the current exhibition of Chinese Ceramics, at the Knoedler Gallery, illustrated by pieces from Mr. S. T. Peters' Collection, by Mr. Hobson, and among the illustrations of an article by Dr. Oswald Siren are pictures belonging to Mr. J. G. Johnson, of Philadelphia, and Mr. Dan Fellowes Platt, of New York.

Copies of the Magazine can be had from the American publisher, James B. Townsend, 15-17 East 40 St.

TARIFF RULING INJURIOUS.

The ruling of the art appraisers at the New York Custom House, the principal port of entry for art works in the country, and which is now presumably being followed at other American entry ports, as to originals and replicas of modern paintings, to which we exclusively called attention some weeks ago, and also exclusively predicted as likely to occur, last October—continues to oppress and embarrass the deal-

ers in foreign paintings, as will be seen by the interviews with several prominent firms, and the experiences of others, published elsewhere in our columns.

As we said last week, the dealers should organize and endeavor to obtain relief from the paradoxical and absurd twisting of the meaning of the word "original" in the art tariff clause, from the Secretary of the Treasury at Washington, and failing this, should petition Congress for a different construction of the word.

Strange that in this enlightened age and country business trouble should be caused in a season which has been and is sufficiently troubled already, by the stupid construction placed by Government officials, ignorant of a subject and trade, upon an ordinary and easily understandable English word.

ART TARIFF RULING OPPOSED.

Interviewed by a N. Y. "Herald" reporter on the present construction and ruling of the Art Tariff as to originals and replicas recently discussed editorially in the ART NEWS, the opinion was generally expressed by leading New York dealers that the attitude of the authorities in challenging every picture as a replica and exacting duty unless it could be proved otherwise, defeated not only the letter but the spirit of the law.

Blames Law, Not Appraiser.

Mr. Stevenson Scott, of Scott & Fowles, said:

"It is the law that is ridiculous and not the ruling of the appraiser. It was a mistake to insert the word 'replica' in the law. The word should have been 'copy.' Then the appraiser could have used his own judgment instead of having to demand proof as to replicas. Art dealers should have been consulted by the framers of the law.

"It is now up to the importer to prove that a painting is not a replica, and in many cases it can't be done. Take the cases of Henner and Bouguereau, who used the same subjects many times, and of B. W. Leader, the English landscapist, who painted a dozen replicas of his 'At Evening Time It Shall Be Light' for one dealer. Who can say which is the replica and which the original?"

Another dealer said "that if the ruling stood the customs department would not need 'experts' on its staff but clairvoyants, for no one else could look into the past. Almost every great picture in the world existed either in duplicate or triplicate."

Calls Ruling Nonsensical.

Mr. H. L. Ehrich, of the Ehrich Galleries, said:

"The ruling of the customs authorities is nonsensical. In the European museums are many fine pictures painted by unknown artists. Nobody can tell whether they are originals or replicas. The present interpretation of the law is worse than the twenty year clause, if a duty is to be paid at all, why not tax the works of all living artists and admit free the works of deceased artists? However, I believe most emphatically in free art."

Mr. Brandus' Opinion.

Mr. Edward Brandus said:

"The idea that a picture painted when the battle of Waterloo was being fought, in 1815, by any one of ten thousand artists then living has to pay duty unless it can be proved that the artist never painted another like it, is absurd. It isn't in the law, and it never was intended to be in the law. The artist is somewhere in the Great Beyond, and neither the appraiser nor any expert he can name can get at the bottom of the matter. Cazin often painted the same subject, one in evening light, the other in the morning. Ziem painted the grand ducal palace at Venice scores of times.

Four oil paintings by Lucius L. Rossi, an artist who died last year, consigned to Manzi, Joyant & Co., are held by the customs authorities.

The ruling of the Treasury Department, forced Mr. M. Birnbaum, of the Berlin Photographic Co., to put up \$2,000 security for the payment of duties before he could secure paintings by Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon for the present exhibition at his galleries. The pictures have been held up for weeks, although Mr. Birnbaum states that there is no question as to their being "originals."

THAT VEXATIOUS DUTY.

M. Durand-Ruel, Jr., of Durand-Ruel & Sons, of Paris and New York, gave the "Herald" recently interesting details concerning the difficulties to which importers of art works into the United States are subjected by a recent customs ruling.

"Until about the end of 1913," said Mr. Durand-Ruel, Jr., "foreign paintings and art objects were liable to a duty of fifteen to twenty per cent."

"The new tariff which came into force October 3, 1913, allowed free entry for all original works. Foreign artists naturally welcomed this decision, while Americans, although they have not said so openly, deplored it, as it meant an advantage to foreign competitors. Furthermore, numerous well-remunerated 'experts' of the American customs became practically superfluous."

"Through other measures they therefore succeeded in obtaining from Washington regulations so strict as to stop, should they be continuously applied, all importations of art works, as the law says free entry is only allowed for original works."

"The United States customs contend this free entry can only apply to such works as have been authenticated by 'experts' appointed by the customs, and not copies, reductions or replicas even made by the artists themselves. In addition to this they demand that the artist shall go to the American Consulate and declare not only that the picture is authentic but that it is the first ever made of the subject."

"Such a proceeding would be a ludicrous imposition on popular artists. Artists often make several tentative paintings of one subject."

"Regarding ancient pictures, the customs will not take any other opinion but that given by an 'expert' appointed by them, who specializes in one particular school or period."

"All this red tape has put a stop to the importation of art works into the United States. We have been requested by cable to cease any further shipments. All pictures we have previously sent are to be returned."

SMUGLY SELF SUFFICIENT.

The "Fine Art Trade Journal," of London, says in its February number: "New York As An Art Center."

"In an editorial article under this title the AMERICAN ART NEWS puts forward a claim for the commercial capital of the United States which has given us a good laugh. 'New York,' we are told, 'has become the art hub of the world, as far as the commerce in art works is concerned.' This extraordinary assertion appears to be mainly based on the statement—which is doubtless true—that our contemporary contains the advertisements of a larger number of firms seeking the patronage of art collectors than the 'Journal des Arts' of Paris. By parity of reasoning, London, we suppose, might be absolutely ruled out of the comparison by virtue of the fact that it does not even possess a weekly art newspaper! We are then reminded, as further evidence in support of the proposition, that the premises of art dealers in New York are much more imposing architecturally than those of art dealers in either London or Paris. Quite true, but the display in architecture equally with the display in advertisement simply arises from the fact that the American art dealer possesses an enterprise to which his foreign 'confrère'—whether in London or Paris—is almost a stranger. All the same he has not accomplished the impossible and justified the boast of the AMERICAN ART NEWS. The same issue of this journal contains the report of the sale of an important collection of Old Masters and early English pictures in which it is admitted that 'the figures ranged very low.' In all probability the collection, if put up at Christie's or the Hotel Drouot, would have realized two or three times as much."

[There is probably more money changes hands during an art season in New York than in either London or Paris. The dealers certainly sell more paintings, sculptures and other works of art, and the auction sales, while not so frequent as at Christie's or the Hotel Drouot, are quite numerous, and some of the most important art sales in the world in the last half century have been held in New York. The fact that London does not possess a weekly art newspaper really proves much of our point, and as to the argument that figures ranged very low in one recent sale of old masters in New York (that of the Leon Hirsch collection) this means nothing in particular. How about the five Arundel Reynolds portraits recently sold at Christie's?]

HIRSCH SALE "EXPERTISING."

In view of the discussion that the disappointing result of the sale, Jan. 29 last, of the much "expertised" pictures, owned by the late Leon Hirsch, has excited in Europe, as well as this country, a representative of the AMERICAN ART NEWS called this week upon Mr. Nathan Hirsch, brother of Mr. Leon Hirsch, and the executor of the latter's estate, through whom the sale was arranged and held, and asked if he had noticed the criticisms published in the London "Morning Post" regarding the sale, republished in the ART NEWS, and especially Di Hofstede de Groot's rejoinder to the "Post's" criticisms in the Rotterdam "Courant."

Mr. Hirsch replied that he had read both the "Post's" criticisms and Dr. de Groot's reply with great interest.

"I attribute the poor result of the sale of my brother's pictures," he said, "first, to the adverse business conditions of the season, which were not and are not propitious for the sale of art works of any kind or description; second, to the fact that Americans as a people really know nothing of art, and that the majority of art works purchased by them of late years, especially at very high prices, have been so purchased, more for personal advertising reasons than anything else; and third, to the fact that if American art lovers and buyers really loved art for art's sake, my brother's pictures, with their endorsements, would have brought much higher prices."

"You have no resentment then towards the 'experts,' who so warmly endorsed your brother's pictures, which, notwithstanding, sold so poorly?" he was asked.

"Not in the slightest degree," replied Mr. Hirsch. "In justice to Drs. Bode, Valentin and others, I must say they all helped my brother to assemble the collection, and this they all did, solely for the love of art, and to aid a young amateur to become a collector."

"I believe," continued Mr. Hirsch, "that the American picture dealers are virtually as one when it comes to passing judgment on pictures not sold by them. All others they disparage or in the expressive slang of the day they 'knock.' I attended a picture sale at the American Art Galleries recently, and a dealer, talking to me, disparaged all the pictures sold and to be sold, so much so that I could almost hear him doing the same at the sale of my brother's pictures a few weeks previously. One of the European 'experts' has said publicly that 'my brother did not pay a great deal for his pictures.' Let this be so, for argument's sake—What has this to do with their intrinsic value?"

"No," continued Mr. Hirsch, after musing a bit. "As to American dealers I am reminded of the experience of a friend in a Western mining camp. Upon his arrival he conversed with a prospector as to certain claims. When the first prospector had departed another came up and said to my friend, 'Beware of that man who has just left you. I have better claims staked—all sure of gold.' So if one asks the average American dealer to examine a picture, he will almost surely declare it is, at best, not an 'important example' and infers if he does not frankly state that the only 'important examples' of the school to which the work belongs, or of other schools, are in his gallery."

"I personally am not an expert," said Mr. Hirsch, "nor do I claim to have any special knowledge of pictures, but I was too long and closely associated with my brother when he was collecting, not to have some knowledge of the situation."

"I do hope," concluded Mr. Hirsch, "for the benefit of art in America that the nasty smallness of the average dealer will disappear in time. Such a change would greatly accrue to the benefit of the dealers themselves, and to the cause of art in America. In my humble opinion, also, the man or woman who pays \$200,000 or \$300,000 for any picture ought to have his or her head examined."

OBITUARY.

William Raphael.

William Raphael, who for fifty years has been a prominent factor in the development of Canadian art, died Mar. 15, aged 81, in Montreal. He studied at the Royal Academy in Berlin under Wolf, Begas, and others and was one of the original members of the Royal Canadian Academy of Art, to which he was called in 1880 by the present Duke of Argyll.

Art collections throughout Canada and the U. S. include many examples of his genre and landscape works, among them "Bonsecours Market," "Montreal in Summer and Winter" and "Habitants Attacked by Wolves."